Routledge
Taylor & Francis Group

ESSAY REVIEW

Torey Hayden's teacher lore: a pedagogy of caring

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This article describes the teacher lore of Torey Hayden, its emphasis on a pedagogy of caring, and its use in preservice teacher education to address affective outcomes. Eight concepts that make up caring relationships and are reflected in Hayden's wisdom of practice are discussed. Four separate studies are then described examining the outcomes of reading Hayden on preservice and inservice teachers' affective understandings and skills. In the first two studies reading Hayden was more effective than reading professional texts in promoting positive attitude changes toward children with disabilities. In the third study decreased punitiveness toward classroom behavior management was associated with the therapeutic impact of reading Hayden. In the fourth study inservice teachers, who had read Hayden in preservice coursework over a 10-year period, rated her stories as a strong influence in preparing them to teach and in shaping their current teacher practices, attitudes, and identity. Reasons why Hayden's teacher lore had a positive influence on teachers' affective development are offered. Hayden's philosophy of attachment and loss in forming relationships is discussed.

Teacher lore, stories about and by teachers, is being increasingly used as a reflective tool in teacher education (Jalongo & Isenberg, 1995). Teacher stories are central to the type of inquiry and reflection that lead to professional development and personal insight. It is through careful examination of real life classroom experience that teachers explore the complexities of what it means to teach. It is in the narrative mode that teachers consider daily dilemmas, examine their motives and misgivings, savor their successes, and anguish over their failures.

Torey Hayden's teacher lore is in the form of her first-person accounts of being a special education teacher in the United States of America. Hayden has authored eight books, which offer readers a real world look at the everyday problems, successes, and struggles of teaching and counseling children whose lives are marked by emotional and behavioral difficulties, abuse and trauma, anger and defeat. Her first book, *One Child* (1980), focuses on Sheila, a silent troubled six-year-old, who has tied a three-year-old boy to a tree and critically burned him. *One Child* was

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followed by *Somebody Else's Kids* (1982), *Murphy's Boy* (1983), *Just Another Kid* (1986), *Ghost Girl* (1992), *Tiger's Child* (1995), the sequel to *One Child*, *Beautiful Child* (2002), and *Twilight Children* (2005). Her books lend themselves to international teacher education, having been translated into 34 languages, most recently Greek, Thai, and Bahasa Indonesian.

A pedagogy of caring

Hayden's teacher lore is remarkable for its emphasis on a pedagogy of caring. Hayden's narrative stresses the personal relationships and emotional connections involved in working with students. Her stories give special voice to the power of emotion, intuition, and relationships in human lives and emphasize the synergistic power of relationships between a teacher and her students. Hayden makes caring relationships the cornerstone of her approach to teaching.

> I had always been a maverick among my colleagues. I belonged to the better-to-have-loved-and-lost school which was not a popular notion in education. The courses, the professionals, all preached against getting involved. Well, I could not do that, I could not teach effectively without getting involved, and in my heart, because I did belong to the love-and-lost school, when the end came I could leave. It always hurt, and the more I loved a child, the more it hurt. But when the time came that we had to part or I had to honestly give up on the child because I could do no more, I could go. I could do it because I took with me, every time, the priceless memories of what we had, believing that there is no more one can give another than good memories. (*One Child*, 1980, p. 204)

For Hayden caring is much more than an affect, it is a way of being. She challenges teachers to live an ethic of care in their day-to-day interactions with students. Hayden maintains an author fan website, http://www.torey-hayden.com, where she and her fans discuss her books, education, and other topics. When questioned on the website's multilingual message board about caring and the extent of involvement in her students' lives and where one draws lines, she responded:

> I find it easy to love people—anyone literally—if this person's care is given to me. I find it easy to get up close and personal and to stay there until I get the job done. I find it easy to care in a very real way. *But*, and this is an important 'but', I also find it naturally easy to be objective at almost all times, to keep my personal needs out of the picture, to keep an eye on the timeframe, to know at all times where the boundaries are … I suppose the best analogy to what is going on here is akin to the comradeship in war—how men tend to form strong bonds during the time they are together under duress of war and matter greatly to each other for that time, but when the war is over, they all part and go their separate ways, often keeping in touch but nothing more. (Message posted to http://www.torey-hayden.com, 1 September 2001)

Tarlow (1996) conducted research on caring relationships at schools. Based on interviews with teachers and students, she found eight basic concepts that make up caring relationships: time, 'be there', talking, sensitivity, acting in the best interest of the other, caring as feeling, caring as doing, and reciprocity. Danforth and Smith (2005) have constructed a pedagogy of caring model based on these concepts, and these eight themes of caring are reflected in Hayden's craft wisdom.

Time

'Time is a necessary, latent force underwriting all caring activities' (Tarlow, 1996, p. 66). Hayden's teacher stories highlight the importance of spending time with students in the formation and maintenance of caring relationships. For Hayden, teaching in self-contained special education classrooms where her class rosters range from four in *Somebody Else's Kids* to nine in *One Child* allow her and her students to develop a familiarity and trust that is unlikely when a teacher has a class of 20 or more. 'Time is our ally in teaching troubling students' (Hobbs, 1982, p. 42), and Hayden embodies this precept spending some one-to-one time with each child each day, even if it is only in a small group setting.

'Be there'

Caring involves 'being there' for someone, being physically present and emotionally available when needed. She responds with unconditional support in a time of need. In *Somebody Else's Kids* Hayden uses the metaphor of a hyacinth bulb to provide emotional support to dyslexic seven-year-old Lori. Here she reminds Lori of how the class had to be patient for the hyacinth bulbs to grow roots in the refrigerator before planting them.

> People are like hyacinth bulbs. All we can do is make a good place for people to grow, but each person is responsible for doing his own growing in his own time. If we get in there and mess, all we do is hurt. No matter how well meaning we are. And sometimes growing is a very silent thing, like the bulbs in the refrigerator. Sometimes we can't even tell it's happening but that doesn't mean it isn't.
> Still the solemnity as she watched me. She did not speak.
> 'So trust me Lor. I want to give you a little more time to grow. You'll read but in your own time. Do you understand that?'
> She nodded earnestly. 'You're putting me back in the refrigerator to make more roots'. (1982, pp. 238–239)

Talking

Talking serves as both a means and an end in caring relationships. For Hayden talking about mundane and serious matters alike served as a means to intimacy, a way of developing a relationship. Hayden's classrooms began with morning discussion and closed with afternoon discussion. These discussions were ends in themselves, a satisfying way of enacting relationships, confirming bonds, and being companions in the moment. Additionally, Hayden views an absence of talking as problematic. In *Just Another Kid* when Geraldine, whose psychopathology is grounded in the death of her parents, stops engaging in meaningful dialogue with Hayden, she realizes she has lost Geraldine.

Sensitivity

Sensitivity is not described as a personal characteristic but as an action that takes much time and effort. Hayden is tuned to the needs and moods of her students. She

takes the time to understand and sense what is going on in students' family and peer friendships lives. She attends closely to the subtle and overt shifts in the emotional and interpersonal drama of her students' lives. Hayden demonstrates sensitivity in a wide range of teacher actions, from talking an out-of-control student down to talking a depressed student up.

Action in the best interest of the other

Hayden is able to set aside personal needs and even school institutional priorities in order to attend to the individual needs of her students. In *Ghost girl* Hayden sits in a bolted cloak room after school to listen to Jadie's tales of ritualistic satanic abuse, despite the principal's rule that no children are to be in the building after school dismissal. In *Somebody else's kids* Hayden appoints Claudia, a depressed, pregnant 12-year-old, as a student helper, and they spend time together after school preparing students' work folders for the following day. Actions taken today were often seen as enabling and empowering a student to live in a more self-reliant and successful way in the future.

Caring as feeling

Tarlow (1966) found that teachers and students described caring as both a feeling and an activity. Sometimes, Hayden and her students become connected in deep ways that stir intense emotions. In *One child* Hayden reads the fable *The little prince* to Sheila, and afterwards they discuss the part where the little prince tames the fox:

> 'Why you do this?', she asked.
> 'Do what Sheil?'
> 'Tame me..
> I did not know what to say. Her water blue eyes rose to me.
> 'Why you care? I can't never figure. Why you want to tame me?'
> 'Well, Kiddo, I don't have a good reason. I guess. It just seemed like the thing to do.'
> 'Do it be like the fox: Do I be special now cause you tame me. Do I be a special girl?'
> I smiled, 'Yeah you're my special girl. It's like the fox says, now that I made you my friend, you're unique in all the world. I guess I've always wanted you for my special girl. I guess that's why I tamed you to begin with.'
> 'Do you love me?'
> I nodded.
> 'I love you too. You be my special best person in the whole world'. (1980, pp. 104–105)

Caring as doing

The dominant conclusion of Tarlow's (1996) research is that caring means doing for others. For Hayden the essence of caring was benevolent activity in behalf of another. Erich Fromm (1956) in his classic book, *The Art of Loving*, corrected those who saw relationship as feeling and insisted relationships were based on actions— specific helping behaviors that created powerful change.

Reciprocity

Tarlow (1996) found that both teachers and students often discussed the caring relationship as a mutual exchange. In her analysis, all of the previous aspects of caring contributed to this final one, to a dynamic interplay involving giving and receiving by each participant. Hayden portrays the caring relationship as a process of giving. Hayden gives of herself: of her interest, her joy, her understanding, her knowledge, her humor, and her sadness. In giving she enriches the lives of her children and that which she brings to life in them is given back to her. As Fromm (1956) noted, love is a power that produces love. In her prologue to *Tiger's Child* (1995), Hayden noted this powerful effect in her relationship with Sheila: 'This little girl had a profound effect on me. Her courage, her resilience, and her inadvertent ability to express that great gaping need to be loved that we all feel—in short, her humanness brought me into contact with my own' (p. 8).

When reciprocity was not honored, as in Geraldine's case, Hayden expressed disappointment. Yet frequently, even when reciprocity occurred in an uneven and inconsistent way, Hayden's teacher–student relationships continued and survived.

Hayden's teacher lore and teacher education research

Hayden's teacher lore seems especially suited for addressing affective outcomes in teacher education. Hayden's stories tap the affective domain by presenting opportunities for deepened relations with others and serve as springboards for ethical actions. Her stories present difficult dilemmas, hard decisions, and choices. In *The Call of Stories: Teaching and the Moral Imagination* (1989), Robert Coles claims that it is only through stories that one can fully enter another's life. In recounting the use of stories in his medical education, teaching, and psychiatric practice, he notes the power of the story in its immediacy and the 'wonderful mimetic power a novel or story can have—its capacity to work its way into one's thinking life, yes, but also one's reveries or idle thoughts, even one's moods and dreams' (p. 204).

Voices in the field of teacher education have promoted teacher narrative as a medium for fostering teachers' affective understandings and skills over the last 20 years, yet there is an absence of research in this area. Four studies by this author and colleagues are reviewed here that examined the effects of reading Hayden on affective teacher education outcomes. In each study the teacher–student encounters in Hayden's narrative served as springboards for inquiry and critique of theory and practice in the education of children with disabilities.

Study I

Marlowe and Maycock (2001) examined the effects of Hayden's teacher lore on preservice teachers' attitudes toward children with disabilities. Using random selection of intact groups, the experimental ($N=20$) and control ($N=18$) groups were students enrolled in separate sections of a six-week module devoted to teaching children with disabilities. The senior researcher taught both sections. A 7-point

semantic differential 'survey of characteristics of children with disabilities' was devised to measure preservice teachers' attitudes. The semantic differential consisted of 20 paired bipolar adjective scales, divided into seven intervals, including traits and format common in stereotype studies, e.g. dull–bright, uncooperative–cooperative. Participants completed the surveys during the first and last weeks of the six-week modules.

The module texts for the control group were textbook chapters which provided definitions, characteristics, and etiologies of disabling conditions, and information on how to modify and adapt learning environments. These textbook chapters served as the primary source for class lectures, discussions, and assignments. The module texts for the experimental group were Hayden's books, *One Child* and *Somebody Else's Kids*, which served as the primary source for class lectures, discussions, and assignments.

Examination of individual scales with analysis of covariance showed that Hayden's teacher lore had a significant effect on positively changing preservice teachers' perceptions of children with disabilities on seven of the 20 scales. The analysis for covariance for combined scales showed a significant difference between the experimental and control group post-test scores ($F=15.83$, $p<0.01$), indicating Hayden's teacher lore had a positive effect on changing attitudes toward characteristics of children with disabilities.

Study II

Hayden's teacher lore's influence on attitudes toward children with disabilities was again examined in a study with preservice teachers enrolled in separate sections of an introductory course in emotional disturbance (Marlowe *et al.*, 1997). Using the same random selection procedures and semantic differential scales used in Study I, experimental ($N=32$) and control ($N=30$) groups completed a 'survey of characteristics of children with emotional and behavioral disorders'. Preservice teachers completed the surveys during the first and last weeks of the 15-week semester. The senior researcher taught both sections.

The course text for the control group was Paul and Epanchin's (1991) textbook, *Educating Emotionally Disturbed Children and Youth*, which served as the primary source for class lectures, discussions, and assignments. The course texts for the experimental group were three books by Hayden, *One Child*, *Somebody Else's Kids*, and *Murphy's Boy*, and two books by Mary MacCracken, *Lovey* (1977) and *City Kid* (1982). Like Hayden's teacher stories, MacCracken's writings are intimate first-person accounts of classroom life with children whose lives are marked by emotional and behavioral disorders. The five books served as the primary source for class lectures, discussions, and assignments.

Examination of individual scales with analysis of covariance showed Hayden and MacCracken's teacher lore had a significant effect on positively changing preservice teachers' perceptions of children with emotional and behavioral disorders on 11 of the 20 individual scales. The analysis for covariance for combined scales showed a

significant difference between the experimental and control group post-tests ($F=9.86$, $p<0.01$), indicating Hayden and MacCracken's teacher stories had a positive effect on changing attitudes toward children with emotional and behavioral disorders.

Study III

In a third study Marlowe and Maycock (2000) examined the effects of reading Hayden's teacher lore on preservice teachers' punitive attitudes toward classroom behavior management. Participants ($N=29$) were enrolled in an introductory course in emotional disturbance taught by the senior researcher. Five books by Hayden served as the primary source for class lectures, discussions, and assignments: *One Child*, *Somebody Else's Kids*, *Murphy's Boy*, *Ghost Girl*, and *Tiger's Child*. Participants completed the Survey of Attitudes Toward Children (SATC) during the first and last weeks of the 15-week semester. The SATC is 27-item, five-alternative self-report scale intended to discern individuals who hold punitive attitudes toward classroom behavior management (Hyman, 1997). Participants also completed the Bibliotherapeutic Checklist (BC), a 20-item, seven-alternative, Likert type rating scale measuring the therapeutic impact of reading a literary text (Marlowe & Maycock, 2000). The BC was administered the last week of the semester. Participants also kept journals about the experience of reading Hayden and the journal data were analyzed with the Colazzi (1978) phenomenological method.

Hayden's response pattern to classroom behavior management in her narrative is nonpunitive (Marlowe *et al.*, 2004). Recognizing children's need to be independent and free, she is not preoccupied with teacher power and obedience. Instead she focuses her efforts on mapping out structure and values and demanding mature, responsible behavior.

A non-independent *t*-test revealed that the group's post-test mean on the SATC was significantly lower than the pretest mean, $t(28)=4.52$, $p<0.001$, indicating reading Hayden had a small, albeit statistically significant effect in reducing preservice teachers' ratings of punitiveness toward classroom behavior management (approximately 11%). Pearson product moment correlations were used to examine the relationship between pretest and post-test change in SATC scores and BC scores. Decreased scores in punitiveness were correlated positively and significantly with the therapeutic impact of reading Hayden ($r=0.58$, $p<0.001$).

Phenomenological analysis of participants' journal entries revealed that the structure of the experience of reading Hayden was one of identification with Hayden's character leading to emotional and cognitive learnings. Preservice teachers noted admiration for Hayden's character (eight referred to Hayden as their role model), and they reported analyzing their own attitudes toward children against the framework of Hayden's beliefs and values. The depth of identification with Hayden's character seemed related to the depth of emotional and cognitive learnings. Regarding emotional learnings, participants reported overcoming feelings of isolation and anxiety about teaching, of now 'being a member of the Torey

Hayden fan club'. Overcoming isolation flowed into a sense of validation ('I now know it is okay to belong to the better-to-have-loved-and-lost school of thought'), of hope for their teaching future ('I now believe I can make a difference in the lives of students'), and inspiration ('I am now determined to teach children with emotional problems'). Catharsis was also a prominent theme ('I cried and jumped for joy throughout *One Child*'; 'Emotionally, I felt as if I was being peeled like an onion, layer by layer'.).

Regarding cognitive learnings, preservice teachers reported gaining understanding of one's own motivations in teaching children, of one's teaching strengths and limitations, and of increased acceptance and understanding of children with emotional problems. Gathering didactic information was also a prominent theme. Cognitive and emotional learnings tended to overlap as understanding and gaining didactic information led to validation, hope, and inspiration.

Study IV

Marlowe *et al.* (2003) examined inservice teachers' perceptions of the long term influence of reading Hayden in preservice teacher education. Participants (*N*=132) had enrolled in a preservice introductory course in emotional disturbance over a 10-year period (1992–2001), taught by the senior researcher. Five books by Hayden, *One Child*, *Somebody Else's Kids*, *Murphy's Boy*, *Ghost Girl*, and *Tiger's Child*, served as the primary source for class lectures, discussion, and assignments.

Participants completed the Torey Hayden Survey (THS), designed to measure perceptions of Hayden's influence on their current teacher attitudes and practices toward children with disabilities. The THS contained both close-ended and open-ended questions. Close-ended questions assessed Hayden's influence on 20 teacher competencies grouped in the following categories: relationship building (nine competencies), classroom management (seven competencies), consultation and advocacy (three competencies), and curriculum (one competency). Based on the lead statement ('I read Torey Hayden's books in my undergraduate teacher education program, and as a result, I:'), participants rated Hayden's influence on the 20 competencies on a 5-point scale from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5). Four open-ended questions assessed Hayden's influence on participants' professional attitudes and practices:

1. How strong an influence was Hayden compared to other influences, practices, and texts used to prepare you to teach?
2. Did reading Hayden permanently change your attitudes and beliefs about students with disabilities? Why or why not?
3. How did reading Hayden help you to develop your identity as a teacher?
4. What adjectives would you use to describe the qualities you see in yourself that remind you of Hayden?

A mean of 3.0 was a neutral value for a teacher competency. Participants rated Hayden as highly influential in shaping 11 of the 20 competencies (means of 4.0 or

higher) and moderately influential in shaping the other nine (means between 3.5 and 4.0). Eight of the nine relationship building competencies had means above 4.0.

Regarding question one, 83% of the participants indicated Hayden was a strong influence in preparing them to teach: 'opened my eyes to a new world'; 'the ultimate tool in preparing me to meet the demands of my classroom'. Regarding question two, 62% of respondents stated Hayden had positively changed their attitudes toward children with disabilities: 'She permanently instilled the mindset that I can solve a problem with the right thought processes'. Twenty percent stated Hayden had not changed but rather reaffirmed their existing positive attitudes: 'Her books reinforced an attitude of mastery learning and constant love and patience that I already had'. Regarding question three, 95% of the respondents indicated Hayden's teacher lore had a positive effect on the development of their teacher identities. Thirty respondents referred to her as a role model. Regarding question four, 'caring' (N=45) was the teacher identity attribute most linked to Hayden's influence, followed by 'patient' (N=36), 'compassionate' (N=30), 'loving' (N=16), and 'understanding' (N=15). As in Study III, the structure of the experience of reading Hayden that emerged from a phenomenological analysis of the four open-ended questions was one of identification with Hayden's character leading to emotional and cognitive learnings.

Discussion

Taken together, these quantitative and qualitative results provide evidence for using Hayden's teacher lore in teacher education to address affective outcomes. There may be several reasons why reading Hayden had a positive effect on key interaction, affect, and attitude variables. First, in depicting students with disabilities, Hayden's teacher stories are more vivid than the professional text because they provide a more fully imagined world, generally much more complete than our own. Her narrative mirrors the drama of inner lives, and a richer and more poignant understanding of human essence is possible. Within this context, teachers may acknowledge their beliefs and behaviors toward students with disabilities with greater reflection than before.

Second, the structure of Hayden's teacher stories may have served to provoke more reflection about students' capacity to change. Stories are not crystallized; they are fluid and serve as a metaphor for change. The teacher lore of Hayden harbors a deep confidence in human potential and the predisposition of children to act wisely given the psychological opportunity to do so.

Third, reading Hayden may have created a bibliotherapeutic effect. In Shrodes' (1978) psychoanalytic terms, bibliotherapy becomes a process of identifying with another character so that feelings are released and the individual develops a greater awareness of his/her own motivations and rationalizations for his/her behavior. In terms of identification, preservice and inservice teachers referred to Hayden's character as a heroine, a role model, an ego ideal. Regarding emotional learnings or catharsis, teachers wrote they shared Hayden's motivations and conflicts and

vicariously experienced her emotions. Regarding cognitive learnings or insight, teachers reported gaining new understandings about themselves and the lives of children, both inside and outside the classroom, and the gathering of didactic information.

Summary

All of Hayden's books are about relationships. She has developed a philosophy of attachment and loss in forming relationships which threads through her books and has been discussed extensively on her website's message board (Hayden, 2001) For Hayden, forming relationships is central to teaching, but it inevitably implies eventual loss, just the way birth inevitably contains within it the guarantee of eventual death. One of her favorite quotes is: 'A ship in the harbor is safe, but that's not what ships were built for'. In other words, the only certain way to stay safe from loss is never having attachment, but we are a social species and are primed biologically to have relationships from birth. That Hayden formed attachments which she knew ultimately would end simply meant she was able to keep an objective eye on what was going on in her teacher–student relationships—I'm a teacher; my ending comes in June—not that she was any better at loss than her students or that it hurt her any less. Part of what she teaches in forming an attachment is how to cope with loss, and loss comes to all of us. In discussing their parting at the end of the school year, Hayden reminds Sheila of what the fox said to the little prince: 'One runs the risk of weeping, if one lets himself be tamed' (*One child*, 1980, p. 107).

Although not enriched by the sale of Hayden's books, this author closes with an invitation to read Hayden. Her teacher lore is a source for learning and teacher reflection. Noddings (1991) claims that 'stories have the power to direct and change our lives' (p. 157). The studies reviewed here support her position. Participants who read Hayden reported they were changed for the better, and these changes endured over time.

Note on contributor

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